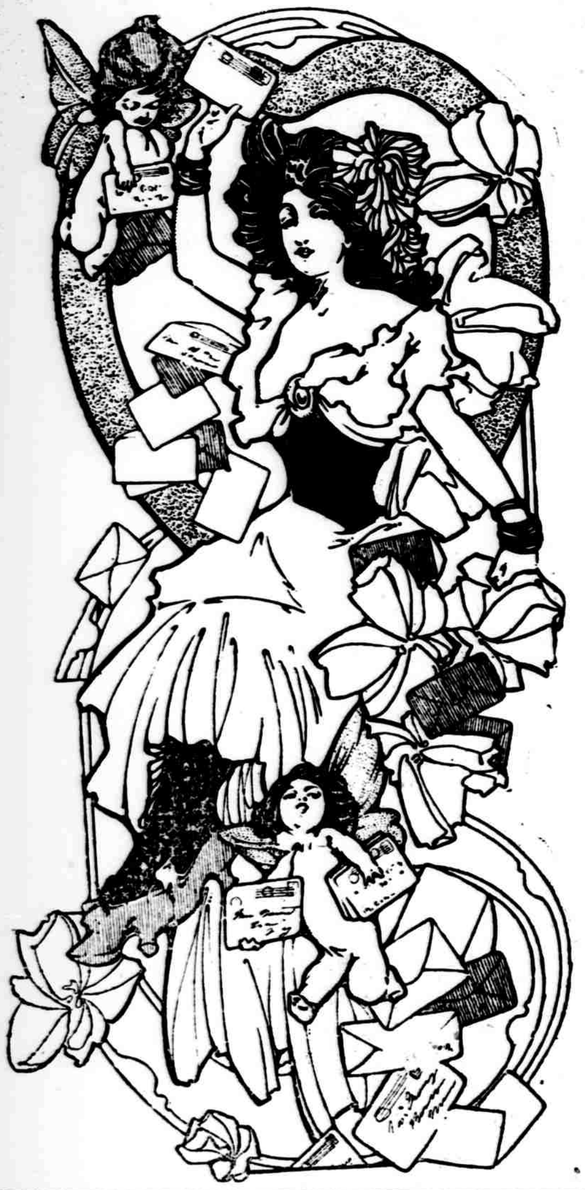


CUPID'S MISSIVES

Something new is doing this year in the way of valentines. The old style of thing, in the line of Cupid's missives appropriate to the season, has gone out rather suddenly, and has been succeeded by an entirely novel fashion.

In the first place, the long familiar comic valentines have "gone out" entirely. Of course, one may buy them at the "penny stores" on alley corners, and, in all probability, similar ones will be sold in such places centuries hence. But they are only for the vulgar—and the very vulgar at that. The verses printed on them are usually abusive and often nasty, and persons who send them through the mails are commonly inspired by motives of malice.

The new style of humorous valentine appeals to the taste of decent people. It is really funny, and not calculated to injure anybody's feelings. Their only purpose seems to be to engender cheerfulness and merriment, and such verses as accompany them are not turned in a spirit of ridicule. They make no fun of the old maid—favorite object of the old-fashioned "comic"—and aim no envenomed shaft at the physical peculiarity or moral weakness of this or that recipient.

Some of these new comic valentines are pasteboard jingle-jacks, cleverly designed, which are made to undergo amusing contortions by the pulling of a string. There is a German boy jingle jack, with a sausage in one hand and a pretzel in the other; an Irishman jingle jack, a schoolgirl jingle jack with a slate in her hand, and a Topsy jingle jack carrying a slice of watermelon. Each of them bears on its breast a heart, with the inscription, "To my Valentine."

A delightfully comic goose, wearing a nightcap and a shawl, with an umbrella of the "Gamp" pattern under its wing, bears the inscription, "If you say no, and let me loose, you will be a great big goose." In another valentine two pussy cats, attired as bowling swells in pantaloons and dress coats, are making love to a fashionably dressed young Tabby in skirts. This is called "The Rivals," and is particularly cute.

"Love's Telegrams" are decidedly a novelty in the line of valentines. They are got up much after the style of real telegrams, and a printed warning at the top state, that if there be any doubt as to the accuracy of the message, "it can be repeated verbally by the sender on receipt of ten kisses." A figure of Cupid carrying a pen thrust through a pair of hearts adorns the telegram, which is, as a matter of course, written in verse, for example:

To My Valentine:
Wire date—can't wait—be quick;
Love-sick—no joke—heart broke.

Quite as amusing in its way is the valentine passport, which is got up in the style of the documents issued by the department of state in Washington for the convenience of American citizens going abroad. The seal on it bears the words, "Department of Love," with a pair of hearts thrust through by an arrow. This kind of passport is granted by the Union of Hearts, and is addressed to "My Sweet Valentine." It is signed by Hymen, and reads as follows:

"I, the undersigned, secretary of state of the Union of Hearts, do hereby request and require, in the name of St. Valentine, that you allow (blank) to pass freely through the realms of Love; also that you afford to her (or him) every protection and encouragement in the furtherance of her (or his) objects."

Then follows a description of the person addressed (eyes, mouth, hair and complexion), which is filled in by the sender. The document is given by Hymen "under my hand and seal on this 14th day of February, in the year of grace 1905."

If the character of the comic valentines has changed, the pretty and relatively serious ones are equally different from what they used to be. Filigree paper and other long familiar incidentals of the old-style designs have disappeared and have been replaced by really artistic bits of color printing and decorative work. The old themes remain, but are "illustrated," as one might say, in a new manner.

In one of the prettiest of the new valentines for this year a cupid is shown in the act of unlocking with a big key a heart which takes the form of a large padlock. It is a dainty conception, implying a hope on the part of the sender that his particular key will prove a fit. Another winged child is riding on the back of a dove, which carries in its beak an arrow. The paint of the arrow is inscribed, "Sweetheart, beware!" and on the other end are the words: "Thy charms are many, my merits few; yet I venture to offer my homage true."

A valentine is hardly complete, whatever its design may be, without a cupid. In one of the new ones Love is playing on a mandolin and looking up at two doves billing. In another the winged god is painting a picture on a heart-shaped plaque. Above his head are hung on a line several similar plaques, each of them bearing the portrait of a pretty woman. Perhaps this valentine is meant to be sent to a young man accused of fickleness. A big heart of violets incloses the whole.

Obviously for a young man is a heart-shaped valentine bearing the words "Good luck" and ornamented with pictures of cigarettes and playing cards. Thus playfully are the little masculine weaknesses touched up, and in no spirit of unamiable criticism.

Designs with colored cupids—winged pickaninnies with their wool done up in little twists—are more than half humorous. But none of the new style of comic valentines have any suggestion of malice in them, or even of ridicule. They are just pleasant and friendly greetings, appropriate to the anniversary of the good saint who is supposed to be especially the patron of lovers.

MANY TRADITIONS OF ST. VALENTINE

Quaint Customs of the Past Compared With Artistic Missives of the Present.

St. Valentine's day was once so great a festival that men and women were well acquainted with its origin. They were certain that the 14th of February would bring many sentiments of tender love. The festival always suggested kindliness of heart. But now with only the shadow of the day left men and women try to console themselves in wondering how this day came. Its origin is uncertain, for through the great lapse of time the Christian and pagan festivals have become so closely blended that they are not to be distinguished clearly.

The French say that many, many years ago there was a priest who loved children better than anything else in the world. The children loved him quite as much, and they went to him with all their sorrows and to hear stories from his knee. Valentine was so kind and loving with the little ones that his name grew beloved throughout the kingdom. The children began to visit him in such numbers that the good priest could not see them all, and asked those he could not see to write him letters, saying that he would answer them. The letters he wrote were so kind and tender that they were prized greatly. When the good man died, the children, to show their affection for him, wrote love tokens to each other on his birthday.

It is known that many pretty customs were once associated with this day. A favorite pastime was the placing of names in a box, from which the names of the young men and women were drawn. The man was to have the maiden for the day whose name he got from the box. Sometimes if two young people grew fond of each other they were valentines for life.

Another quaint custom was practiced by young girls. They took bay leaves and pinned four on the corners of their pillows and put the fifth in the middle so that they might dream who their loves should be. Other girls wrote their lovers' names on bits of papers and rolled them in clay and put them in water to see which would come to the top. A young girl writing about this practice says: "I lay abed and shut my eyes all morning till he came to our house, for I would not have seen another man before him for all the world."

The custom of drawing and matching names seems to date back to the days of the Roman empire. There was a feast in honor of Pan and Juno in February, the festival of Lupercalia. The names of young women were put in a box and drawn as chance directed by the men.

In the days of the early church, when every effort was made to do away with old superstitions and pagan customs, saints' names were substituted. But the memory of dead saints is nothing to the living, breathing lover, and the outline of the custom has been preserved in different ways in all centuries, the lovers never asking nor caring if it be pagan or Christian.

An influence was supposed to pervade the charmed hours. Birds chose their mates on that day with madrigals of love. Love blossomed with the spring in young hearts.

Ancient custom were much as now. The refined and cultured sent missives of love—flowers, dainty jeweled remembrances; the rustic wrote verses to his maid; the cynic and the malicious sent anonymous letters or pictures with a stinging reminder of some weakness or fault.

A traveler in England and Scotland in olden times speaks of a custom much like our game of forfeits. Maids and bachelors congregated and each wrote his or her name on billets of paper which were drawn by the other sex. Each got a valentine. The maid hers—the man his. Each had two valentines, but the man was most devoted to the one he drew.

In Norfolk an ancient custom prevailed of attaching notes to apples or oranges on St. Vanentine's eve and watching a chance to throw them in a doorway, then rap and disappear as quickly as possible. Sometimes a white square was chalked on the step, and its resemblance to the valentine was eagerly grasped by the person opening the door, to the amusement of the mischief-loving one watching. These pranks were more like our Halloween observances.

Another custom was for three young men to go out before daybreak with a net and catch an old owl and two sparrows. If they brought them home without injury before the women of the house had arisen they were treated to three pints of purl and could demand the same at any similar house. Symbolic of the owl being the bird of wisdom, it could influence any of the feathered race to take the net of love that day, and suggesting to lads and lasses the happiness of early unions.

The first person one met on going abroad on Valentine's day was supposedly one's destiny, and great care was exercised as to the proper person to meet in consequence.

Valentines in earlier days were written on plain sheets of paper, not printed. But soon they preferred to pen their words on folded sheets with lace edges. One of these early home valentines is seen in the British museum; it is made of a sheet of paper about as large as a lady's pocket handkerchief, folded into squares about four inches.

Valentine's day as a love festival has lost much of its significance during the last fifty years. It is so much easier to buy the pierced hearts and flying cupids and to trust that the seniments found on them may be appropriate. Still there are many children in all parts of the world who are designing their own valentines and writing their own sentiments. Some of these designs are crude, others are elaborate and beautiful. A bright red heart and a golden arrow are among the favorite designs.

There is no country where the valentines are prettier and more original in design than in France; this is partly because even to this day the children love the name of St. Valentine. So they are careful in making these tokens of love. German boys are rich in sentiment, though they do love a soldier's cap and a gun. American men may be shy about expressing their feeling, but American boys are not, and so Billy makes short work in telling Dorothy that he loves her.

The years have gone by, and young men and women think no more of the kind, gentle priest who sacrificed his life on the altar of love. Yet children, with their true feeling of gratitude, will always love and remember the good French priest who loved them, and, although the sentimentalists are prone to decry the decadence of the day, the dealers declare that artistically the valentine is in its heyday, and that never were the offerings so varied or so beautiful as they have been this year.

Many new ideas have appeared, but hearts as usual seem to be one of the prevailing designs. There are delicate little hand-painted hearts, interwoven with dainty baby ribbon; there are large red hearts, tied in rich red satin ribbon, forming a background for an artistically designed Cupid. Then there are small red hearts, with sweet little love messages, and flowered hearts, enshrining mischievous Cupids.

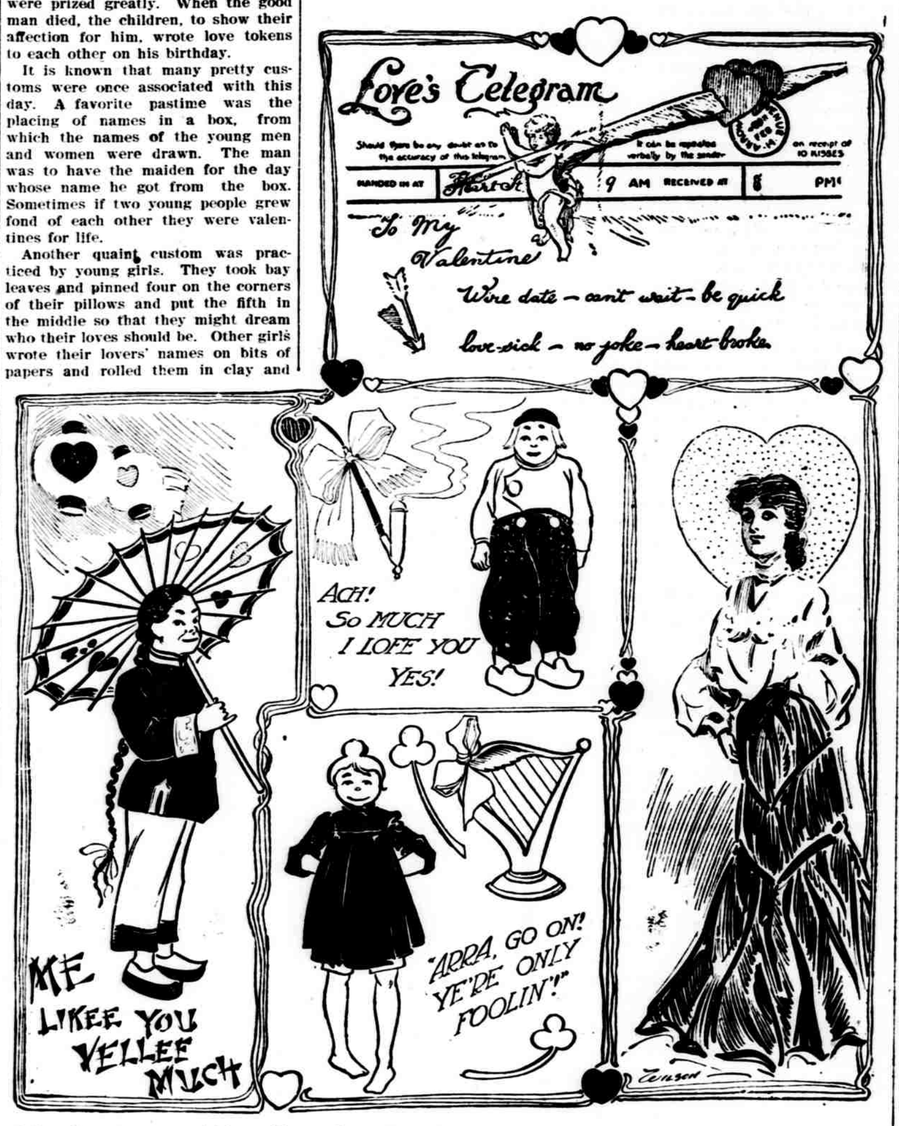
The most artistic valentines, perhaps, appear on the plain white oblong cards, some with delicate water color designs; others in india ink, usually in each case showing the head or bust portrait of some beautiful society girl. A silhouette of a pretty girl, with a pen and ink inscription below, forms one unique and artistic design. Then there is a four-leaf clover valentine. The card is a neat white oblong, with a heart-shaped depression near the upper left side, in the center of which appears the photogravure head portrait of a handsome girl, framed in gold and green rings, from the lower rim of which extends a single clover leaf spray.

Similar in design are the Japanese valentines, so stylish for children this year. A tall, oblong-shaped card, with a square depression near the top, bears a brightly colored picture of a little Japanese boy or girl. On the lower right side is set the inscriptions in bright red letters, reading from the top downward.

Among the odd designs in valentines, mostly for children, are the clock, with the hours marked off in hearts; the thermometer, with cupids hiding among forget-me-nots, along the sides; little carriages, with boys wheeling their sweethearts, and a red heart furnace, which cupids seated on the hearth, are filling with wood.

A neat little leap year valentine for a girl to send to a boy is a four leaf clover, made of hearts, each heart being tied with a small bow, to be returned or accepted, according as the love message is accepted or rejected.

It is eminently fitting that St. Valentine's day should come in February, for this month, although the shortest of the year, is the one on which tradition and legend has taken an especial hold. There are days for the religious, the superstitious, the patriotic—days for the lover of history, the lover of play and the lover of love and other days yet. She has one-fourth of the legal holidays of the year—exclusive of election days—one rare day, a love day, two birthdays, one very holy day and more than one prophetic day, and all these days are "among the high tides of the calendar."



HEARD LINCOLN IN 1860.

Oldtimer Writes of an Excursion From Chicago to Springfield, Ill., Where He First Listened to Speech from the Idol of the West.

There frequently come to my mind the tumultuous days of 1860, when the comparatively unknown Abraham Lincoln was nominated for the presidency in the wigwam at Chicago for the first time, writes A. B. C. Hitchcock in the Chicago Inter Ocean. Though in the city I did not have a coveted ticket to the convention, either as a delegate or silent spectator; but there were thousands in the same fix, so there was enough going on on the outside to engage the attention of boy, fresh from the farm, with a decided bucolic flavor.

All through the summer of that year there was intense political activity in the Queen of the Lakes, and outspoken loyalty mingled with disloyal and defiant mutterings almost everywhere, for the impending sanguinary conflict was in the air. Some time in September a great Republican meeting was widely advertised to be held in Springfield, the home of Lincoln, and the railways all over the state and adjoining states planned excursions, offering extremely low rates—the round trip from Chicago being but $3. I concluded to be among the excursionists.

Three long passenger trains started from the city and it was our misfortune to board the last one. Misfortune, I say, for the other two trains seemed filled with patriotic gluttons on a foraging expedition, for the trains followed each other so closely that the eating houses did not have time to recuperate or replenish, so they were as bare, when our train arrived, as the cupboard of Old Mother Hubbard—not a bone left. The day was delightful, the air just keen enough to whet our appetite to an edge which would not have questioned the quality of any spread obtainable—even breakfast food half sawdust, would have been relished. Our train missed but a very few of the side tracks, and lingered for a while on most of them. So a day and a night were consumed before Springfield hove in sight. The city was but an insignificant one compared to what it is now, and was pervaded by the spirit of the sluggish, turbid Sangamon on whose banks it reposed, and was in no way prepared to take care of such a congested mass of humanity, estimated at over 100,000 people. Square meals and lodgings were out of the question and fortunate was he who could get crackers, a stale sandwich or a second-hand cup of coffee.

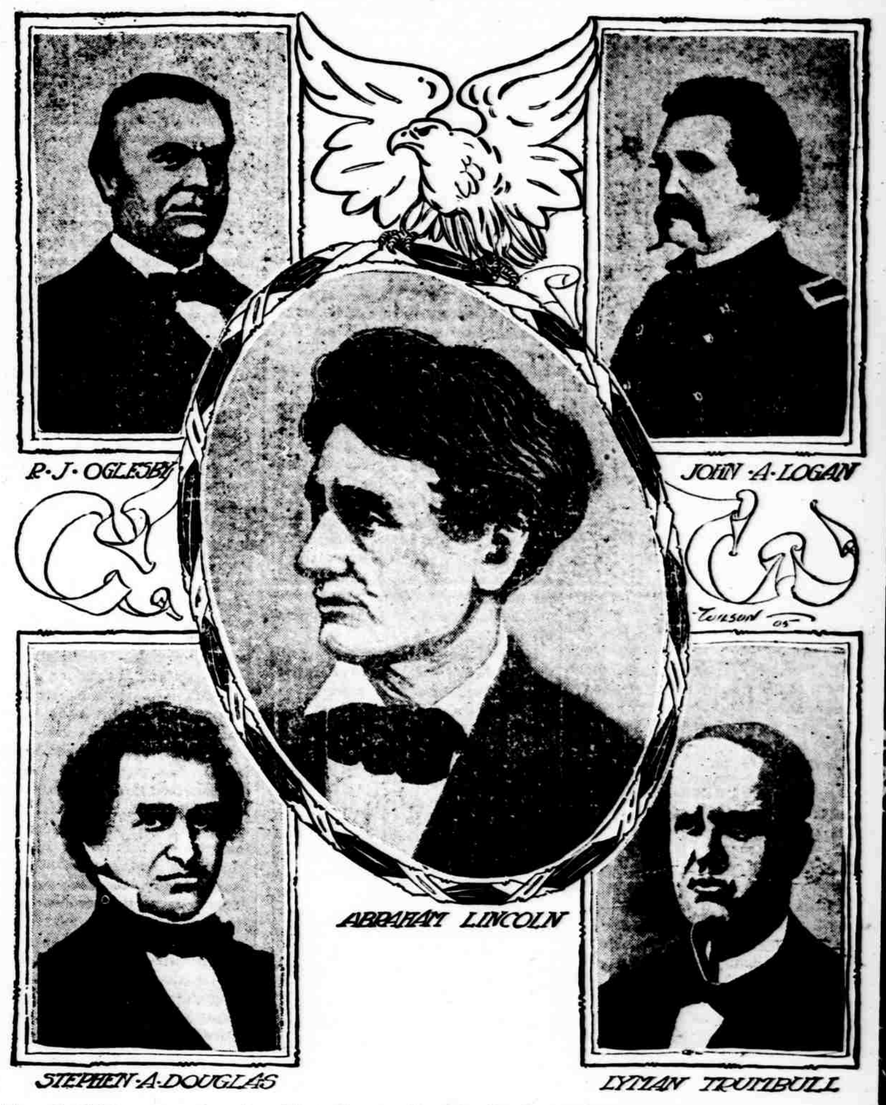
The only thing, except people, was watermelons. Every available spot seemed piled with them, huge specimens, at from 5 to 10 cents apiece. They were bought for refreshing seats, to slake thirst, and the seeds and pulp rinds made walking exceedingly precarious, as much so as a highway of banana skins. Rubber boots were a necessity if one would have dry feet. It must have been the banner season for the esculent, the people having largely planted the prairies for a crop, having got an inkling somehow that there would be a great demand for campaign purposes. In any event, they were a godsend in this emergency, and, while they were not very nourishing, they kept the blood thin and the stomach distended, thus preventing an utter collapse.

After a breakfast of crackers, cheese and melon, I went to Lincoln's home, which was not thronged at that early hour, was ushered into his unpretentious two-story house, was warmly welcomed by the future president, and sat down at his bidding for a few minutes on a haircloth sofa. Finding out that I was a boy from Vermont—the state that, though the birthplace of Douglas, eagerly embraced Republican doctrines from the very first and has never wavered in its fidelity—he plied me with questions and seemed glad to hear from my lips the esteem for him held by the sturdy residents of the Green Mountain state. I shall never forget the warm clasp of his long, bony fingers, nor the sad but indescribable benignity and tenderness of his homely face when he smiled. His magnanimous spirit and almost infinite tenderness of heart irradiated every lineament and made it beautiful, as rugged scenery becomes charming in the play of sunlight and shadow.

The fair grounds had been selected as the speaking place of the great gathering, and a dozen stands, perhaps, erected, for no one man's voice could reach one-tenth of the listeners. Senator Lyman Trumbull, Illinois, Senator Doolittle, Wisconsin, and scores of lesser lights were there to discuss at length the grave issues with an earnest intensity not equaled since the republic was born. The defiant and threatening mutterings of the southern wing of the democracy were full of ominous forebodings and seemed to inspire the orators of the occasion.

About 3 o'clock a barouche, drawn by white horses, brought Lincoln to the grounds. The crowd was too dense for the team to be driven to the stand, so he alighted and was born upon stalwart shoulders. They were so jostled that it kept the great man waving very much like a turkey perched upon a slender branch in a high wind. The sight was somewhat ludicrous, but he could not fall, for there were too many hands eager to hold him up, deeming it a privilege to but touch the hem of his garment. His trousers were pushed up to his knees, and, though but an humble spectator of the scene, I may be called an assistant in carrying the precious burden, for I grasped one ankle. The platform was finally reached, and, with air of heaven caressing and tossing his locks, he made a brief address in acknowledgment of the honor of being chosen as the exponent of the young party so soon to take the reins of government in its giant hands. He was a natural orator, with a charming voice, and his usually heavy eyes lighted up and reflected the fire of his inmost soul as he warmed to his subject, and a peculiar sweetness irradiated his features, which in repose had not a lineament of anything but sadness. If ever an inworking spirit came to the surface, it was the spirit of Abraham Lincoln. The recollection of those few minutes when he was addressing the multitude is a treasured remembrance.

All through the afternoon and evening store boxes, steps and porches were utilized by spellbinders, politically bubbling over, and, as lodging quarters for the host were out of the question, speechmaking, at sporadic intervals, broke out until the morning hour. By a chance, deemed good luck, I climbed to the top of a fanning mill standing on the platform at the station, and curled up in the hopper, out of all danger of being stumbled over or stepped on. It was not exactly of the shape to fit the human form, so the form had to assume a shape to fit it. It was a coveted place to rest, however, but when I awoke in broad daylight there was an excruciating stiffness in the joints of my frost-covered body which made it exceedingly hard to get off the perch, and some time elapsed before normal shape was assumed, cast, as I had been, in a hopper mold. Not until Chicago was reached was the delight of a square meal experienced, a fast of nearly four days, in which time no boots or garments had been shuffled off, no face washed save in watermelon juice; but as in the economy of our nature pains are not remembered, the recollection of that excursion with its collateral delights, is pleasant to recall.



One of Lincoln's Stories.

"Did you ever hear Mr. Lincoln's lightning-rod story?" asked Speaker Cannon of some friends who were spinning yarns. "Well, it's a good one.

"Mr. Lincoln said he had attended meeting at a country church where one of the stingiest creatures on God's footstool went through the make-me-good idea he was worshiping the Savior. The minister asked for a free contribution to enable the church fathers to buy a lightning rod for the edifice.

"'Surely you are willing to lend to the Lord,' said the minister. 'Is he not the owner of the cattle on a thousand hills? Will he not repay?'

"This was the chance for the old miser to get in his work by giving a reason for not contributing. Rising in his seat, he said:

"'You say the Lord is the owner of the cattle on a thousand hills. Then, why can't he sell some of the cattle and buy a lightning rod?'"—Washington Times.

Lincoln's Response.

An enthusiastic supporter from Buffalo made the trip to Washington during the civil war to see President Lincoln. The visitor, whose name was Johnson, had prepared this polite speech to address to the president, as he reached him at the public reception: "The people of Buffalo, sir, believe in Almighty God and in Abraham Lincoln."

The president gave an extra warm grasp of his visitor's hand, whispering in his ear: "You tell them that they are more than half right."—Buffalo Courier.

An Old Valentine

Out of my "Telemaque," worn and old,
Like a sword from a rusty sheath,
Hath fallen this trifle of lace and gold—
A Lilylike tissue, all shot with gold,
Half veiling a verse beneath.

In the midst of the verse is a heart, transfixed
With an arrow of steely blue;
Oh, the foolish verse, with its metaphors mixed!
Oh, the foolish heart, with the dart transfixed!
And the foolish way to woo!

I remember well the sunny-haired lad
Who wrote in this boyish way;
A dreamer—what glorious eyes he had!
Poor dreamer, whose dreams have grown sere and sad,
And whose hair and hopes are gray.

One fair spring day, when the wood lark's song—
So sweet that it sank like pain
Through our thrilling hearts, as we passed along
Adown leafy aisles—(How that haunting song
Floats back to my mind again!)

The story as old as Adam and Eve's
Was told, while the lark o'erhead
Flung his arrows of song into golden sheaves,
And the silken rustle of tender leaves
Made sweeter the words he said.

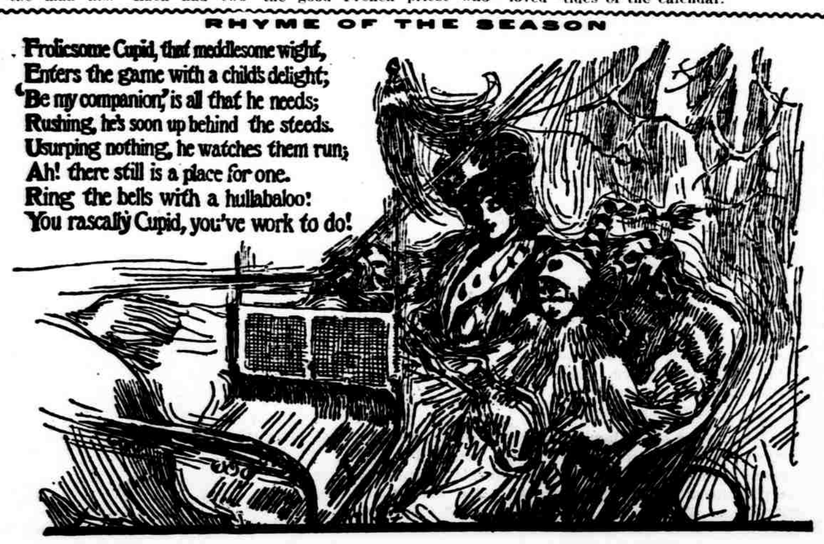
Ah, well! We have all had our "Arcadie,"
And this is the brief of mine.
And the mystic messages, the shining key
That opened that land of delight to me
Was this primitive valentine.

We do these things in a different way
From the younger folk I glean,
In the learned light of this lettered day
We move in a more esthetic way,
And a wiser way, I ween.

But athwart the years, with their grander things,
Their treasures of wisdom and lore,
This trifle of gold shot tissue brings
Remembrance of simple, holier things
That hallowed the days of yore.

—Agnes Mahony.

RHYME OF THE SEASON



LINCOLN AND VIRGINIA.

Agitation Caused by His Letter to Ex-Confederate Official After the Surrender of Gen. Lee.

"In April, 1865, just after the end of the war," said Major Alderson, "I was sitting on the porch of the residence of Lieutenant Governor Price in Lewisburg, in Greenbrier county. I had just returned home from the army, and you may well believe I was enjoying the rest and the company of the prettiest girl in the world, Governor Price's daughter, who was on the porch with me.

"While we were talking," Major Alderson continued, "a soldier suddenly galloped into sight and drew rein at the door. He asked if that was Governor Price's house, and upon my telling him that it was he said he brought a letter for Governor Price from the president of the United States.

"I told him that the governor was down on his farm two or three miles away and that as he seemed tired and broken down I would deliver the letter.

"I found the old fellow at work in the barn fanning wheat," Major Alderson went on, with a reminiscent smile. "They had buried two or three sacks of grain to keep it from falling into the hands of the northern troops, and now they had resurrected it and were cleaning it to have some bread. A negro was turning the wheat fan, another was scraping away the cleaned wheat and Governor Price was standing by the hopper working the grain through to the riddles.

"I jumped off my horse and hurried into the barn.

"'Governor,' I said in some excitement, 'here is a letter for you from the president of the United States.'

"The old fellow turned as white as a sheet. You see, we did not know at that time just what course the United States government would pursue toward the men who had fought in the confederate army or held office under the confederate government. The old fellow broke the seal and took out a large document, portentous looking indeed. He read hurriedly and then laughed.

"'It's all right,' he said, and he handed me the letter. It was addressed to Lieutenant Governor Price, and signed by Abraham Lincoln. It requested him to call the Virginia legislature together at once to take action regarding the changed condition of affairs in the state. In conclusion were these words, which I shall always remember: 'I want you people to come back and hang up your hats on the same old pegs.'

"But on the very night that letter was received, I think," said Major Alderson, "the president was assassinated, and his plans for the government of the states which seceded were never carried out."